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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the need for principals to stay abreast of trends in the curriculum. The principal is the leader of the school and should possess leadership abilities, in addition to understanding thoroughly the curriculum. The principal must set and accept relevant role expectations in determining objectives of instruction. He or she must help establish knowledge objectives and skills that students should be expected to learn, and these two components should mutually reinforce each other. Principals must also lead the way in developing in students a positive attitude about learning since quality attitudes help pupils to become increasingly proficient in attaining knowledge and skills ends. Principals should ensure that learning opportunities capture pupils' attention, that the purpose of each lesson be stated, that students be motivated to learn, that students' different intelligences be nourished, and that teachers be assisted in their pedagogical goals. The school leader should be prepared to teach a class, using the latest research, and should provide leadership in the school to help teachers use evaluation procedures. Since evaluation is continuous, principals can provide teachers feedback on what should be emphasized in ongoing lessons and can help teachers and students to prepare portfolios. (RJM)

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The role of the principal has changed much from being a manager of the school to being actively involved in improving the curriculum. The curriculum involves all the experiences that the school has to offer. Thus, the objectives need thorough and careful consideration. They set the guidelines for instruction and emphasize the ends that the school wishes pupils to obtain. These objectives stress what teachers should emphasize as learning opportunities so that the objectives may be accomplished. Certainly, there needs to be valid and reliable means of evaluation to ascertain if the objectives have been achieved by leaners (Ediger, 1996, 544-545).

The Role of the Principal in Establishing Objectives

The principal of the school needs to set and accept relevant role expectations in determining objectives of instruction. He/she cannot afford to sit idly by and hope that pupils are learning and progressing. Rather, the principal is one who can be looked upon to provide leadership in setting objectives. These objectives must then be implemented in teaching and learning. The objectives need to be openended so that leeway is there for teacher and pupil flexibility in being actively involved in the setting and implementing of objectives. An objective such as pupils identifying and solving problems is quite openended in terms of which problems to select by pupils with teacher guidance, and yet the objective is specific and stresses problem solving as learning activities and not rote learning, nor memorization. Not all objectives will have this openended feature, but may be more restricted such as pupils developing proficiency in particular word recognition skills when reading is emphasized across the curriculum. Thus, the use of context clues, phonics, syllabication, and the use of pictures as means of identifying new words will need to be taught as needed (Ediger, 1995, Chapter One).

The principal will also need to provide leadership in having the concept of balance being emphasized in determining objectives of instruction. Thus, there are knowledge ends, among two other kinds of objectives, that need identification. Vital knowledge such as pupils achieving relevant facts, concepts, generalizations, and main ideas need to be in the offing. Subject matter may be stressed within problem solving situations as learners gather information for solutions. Or, subject matter may be taught more directly such as in current events when an earthquake, tornado, hurricane, or other disaster hits a region. Here, the pupil may learn about the geographical location of these

EA 030198

incidences as to the number of casualties involved, what is done to minimize the harmful affects upon human beings, as well as the causes for each kind of catastrophe such as earthquakes.

In addition to knowledge objectives, skills need to be selected for pupils to acquire. Skills actually stress pupils using knowledge that has been achieved. Knowledge and skills objectives should become one and not separate entities, whenever possible. A skill such as critical thinking cannot be stressed without inherent knowledge. In making contrasts and comparisons among settings in different literary selections, critical thinking is in evidence. The same is rue when comparisons are being made in characterization, plots, themes, and irony. Skills then emphasize knowledge being put to use. Higher revels of thought indicate a need for skills objectives in the curriculum (Ediger, 1999, Chapter Two).

A third kind of objective, namely, attitudes, are also vital to identify and implement. Attitudes can be positive or negative on the part of learners. Educators realize the importance of pupils liking and appreciating different curriculum areas. Quality attitudes help pupils to become more and increasingly proficient in attaining knowledge and skills ends. Good attitude toward the self and toward others are a plus for any human being. Attitudes generally are a by product of having participated in a given activity. A learner having been successful tends to feel better about the self and others. Success is a powerful factor in having pupils grow, achieve, and develop. There seemingly are people who succeed in spite of experiencing very unfortunate events in life. However, the teacher needs to guide pupils to developing feelings of, "I can achieve," rather than "It can't be done," within reasonable possibilities.

The principal is a leader and needs to have a positive influence upon teachers. He/she realizes involved obstacles in developing a quality school, but is willing to overcome these difficulties through problem solving. The principal, too, involves the talents of teachers in working toward solutions of problems. There is much that exists within teachers that needs to be tapped and brought forth in the cooperative and collaborative endeavors of problem solving. The principal, teachers, parents, and support personnel need to work together in order to develop the best objectives for pupils to achieve that are feasible (Ediger, 1993, 12-14).

Learning Opportunities to Achieve Objectives

The principal should not be holed up in his/her office but provide leadership in developing and using the best criteria to select objectives as well as quality leaning opportunities. Guidelines are always necessary to use as a basis for making selections. Thus, there is

something within the person that provides a basis for decision making. These guidelines for decision making are practical and functional. For example, when studying the history of education, Puritans in the New world in Massachusetts Bay Colony believed that physical punishment was to be used when pupils lacked "motivation." If a pupil did not put forth effort the way the teacher desired, he/she was made to kneel on jagged pieces of wood, was spanked or slapped, and/or rapped on the knuckles, among other negative approaches. Being mean, rude, and unkind do provide guidelines in dealing with others, but hopefully these approaches are all a thing of the past, at least in the school setting. Rather, the school principal needs to set the tone involving the following behaviors when interacting with people:

1. being accepting of others as having valuable resources to offer in problem solution.
2. being a caring person who has feelings of empathy and consideration.
3. being a person who is not aloof but is readily approachable in helping to improve the curriculum.
4. being a person who respects other individuals.
5. being highly knowledgeable about improved curricular practices.
6. being skilled in working with faculty and parents in assisting each pupil to learn as much as possible in achieving stated objectives.
7. being a responsible person accountable for doing quality work in the school and community setting.
8. being available for conferences and providing assistance to teachers as needed in teaching and learning situations.
9. being able to establish a school culture which is wholesome and stresses cooperation in the solving of problems in the instructional arena.
10. being a leader in inservice education and meeting instructional needs of teachers, parents, and pupils (See Duffy and Hoffman, 1999)..

The role of the school principal is complex indeed! He/she is responsible for developing a quality school whereby pupils individually achieve objectives in an optimal manner. No pupil is permitted to fall through he cracks, but is assisted to achieve to the best degree possible. Problem soling is involved in helping pupils to attain objectives.

Which guidelines then need to be in effect to assist pupils to achieve as much as possible? Learning opportunities need to capture pupil attention. When supervising student teachers and cooperating teachers in the public schools, one major problem noticed is that the attention of pupils sequentially was somewhat difficult to obtain and maintain. Pupils may come to school tired and hungry and are not in the best condition to attend to the ongoing leaning opportunities.

Sometimes, a child has mentioned what his father or mother did to disrupt classes and this is felt to be good to imitate presently. Learning opportunities need to be chosen and implemented to obtain pupil attention for sustained learning.

Second, in my observations of student/cooperating teachers teach in the public schools, time was not allotted to state the purpose of the lesson. Stating the purpose or reasons for the new lesson need not take long. Perhaps a few sentences will clarify. Thus, a teacher may briefly explain the purpose by saying, "We had some difficulty with using quotation marks to end sentences so a little time must be given here to use these marks properly." Models may then be shown of proper and improper use of quotation marks. Learners need to raise questions when necessary to clarify what was taught. It pays for teachers to provide a reason for pupils to participate in a given learning opportunity (Ediger, 1994, 302-307).

Third, motivated learners achieve better than do the nonmotivated. Here, the teacher needs to use learning opportunities that raise the energy level of pupils for learning. I have noticed teachers having pupils dramatize what might appear initially to be motivationless for pupil learning. For example, in learning parts of speed in grammar, a teacher had pupils dramatize action words or verbs. Thus, a pupil "walked," "skipped," or "ran" to indicate action in a verb. Or, pupils brainstormed words that would take the place of the subject in the following sentence: The boy rode the bicycle. Easy words to mention that substitute are girl, man, woman, child, adult, and others. One learner mentioned he had seen a dog ride a bicycle in a circus. There are indeed many possibilities here. Active engagement in learning generally does provide for motivational experiences.

Fourth, pupils do possess different intelligences (Gardner, 1993). If possible and feasible, the teacher needs to encourage pupils to use their unique intelligence(s) to indicate what has been learned. Pupils then may reveal what has been learned through verbal/linguistic methods; logical /mathematics; visual/spatial; musical; bodily/kinesthetic; interpersonal; and/ or intrapersonal. For example verbal/linguistic intelligence stresses reading and writing whereby the learner might indicate what has been accomplished through the taking of tests. Or a child with interpersonal intelligence may show achievement in group endeavors since working with others is a possessed strength. The school principal may take a leading role in assisting teachers to understand and use multiple intelligences theory in having learners reveal that which has been learned.

Fifth, the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) has much to offer classroom teachers. Here, the principal may guide teacher understanding of what is meant by this theory and how to use it in classroom teaching. Pupils individually, for example, are presently

achieving at a certain level of accomplishment. However, the objectives to be emphasized desire learners individually to attain at a higher level. The difference in pupil achievement between the present versus the desired level indicates a gap and will need the guidance of the professional teacher to provide learning opportunities to fulfill the gap. A variety of activities suitable for learner achievement then needs to be in the offing. Teachers need to think of the Zone of Proximal Development when teaching pupils to achieve optimally.

These five criteria will provide the teacher much guidance in teaching and learning situations. Each pupil needs to achieve as much as possible, be it in individual and/or collaborative endeavors.

In addition to assisting teachers to use the above named guidelines in teaching pupils, the principal also needs to have a repertoire of specific learning opportunities to use in teaching and learning. For example, in teaching pupils in the reading curriculum, pupils are not understanding and are failing to use context clues to identify unknown words. Here, the principal may model how this may be done in a contextual situation. The unknown word being proposed needs to make sense within the sentence being read. If this does not solve the problem in word recognition, the principal may demonstrate the use of phonics such as guiding pupils to look at the first letter in the unknown word and associate the necessary sound. Generally, a pupil then can pronounce what initially was an unknown word. Further steps may need to be taught to identify an unknown word such as syllabication. The prefix "un" for example may then be separated from the rest of the unknown in making the word "unimportant" known when reading in context.

Each curriculum area will need suggestions for learning activities so that pupils may achieve objectives:

1. In mathematics, a teacher may need to use more of manipulative materials so that pupils understand the commutative property of addition. Thus, sticks used in teaching may represent having the related addends changed from a+b to b+a.

2. In science, pupils may need to have more emphasis placed upon a hands-on approach in learning. Thus to show that air takes up space, a tissue paper may be placed inside a glass tumbler which is inverted into an aquarium filled with water. Pupils then might see and examine how dry the tissue paper is and meaningfully understand that air takes up space.

3. In social studies, pupils may need a greater variety of experiences in order to develop and maintain interest in learning. Construction experiences might then be emphasized by the school principal. Here, pupils with teacher guidance may develop a mural on high tech farming when studying a unit on "The Changing World of Agriculture."

4. in health units of study, the pupil with teacher assistance may make several dioramas on the basic food groups within an ongoing unit of study. The 3 dimensional diorama may be housed inside a paper box, approximately one foot by one foot in length and width, with a depth of about eight inches. The basic food groups may then be shown along with added abstract sentence entrees to indicate meaning and understanding of what is being learned in the health curriculum. Art work is incorporated with the making of dioramas in an ongoing lesson/unit of study.

5 kinesthetic activities may easily be incorporated into many units of study in the curriculum. Thus, in social studies, pupils may play games of other nations that children there play, such as in a unit on Mexico. The services of resource people who have traveled extensively or lived in Mexico might well have many contributions to make on games Mexican children play which stress motion and movement.

Evaluation Procedures

The principal needs to provide leadership in the school setting to assist teachers to use evaluation procedures which appraise what pupils have learned. The evaluation is stressed in terms of pupils having achieved the stated objectives. Traditional evaluation techniques have emphasized using standardized tests. These tests are written by those removed from the local classroom setting. The test items on these tests do not have related objectives of instruction. It then becomes hit or miss in terms of how valid these test items are. What pupils have had opportunity to learn should be appraised, not what might have little relationship to teaching and learning in the learner's curriculum. The pupil needs to have chances to achieve objectives stressed in ongoing lessons and units of study, not what is remote and unrelated to his/her experiences in the classroom.

Statewide tests may be in vogue and required. Generally, there are objectives that are provided to the teacher to ascertain what should be taught in the curriculum. The teacher chooses the learning activities to align with the state mandated objectives. Situations such as these make it more fair to the learner since he/she has had opportunities to learn that which will be related to items on the state mandated test. Standardized tests as well as state mandated tests are a one shot case, usually given once per school year, if that frequently. However, pupils have learning opportunities throughout the school day, week, and months. Should evaluation not be more frequent then than once per year?

Evaluation that is continuous provides information to the teacher as to what should be emphasized in ongoing lessons and units of study. What pupils miss on teacher prepared tests might then become a part of

the next day's prepared lessons. Locally prepared tests by the classroom teacher may, in part, then evaluate what pupils have learned and what is left to learn. These tests may be diagnostic in nature. Which kinds of tests developed by the teacher might then be used to determine if pupils have achieved objectives? Traditional true/false, multiple choice, essay, matching and completion tests which are well written might well help to ascertain what pupils have learned. More recently, the portfolio concept has been recommended to ascertain learner achievement and progress. Pupils with teacher assistance may then select what should go into a portfolio for the individual learner. The products therein should relate to the objectives of instruction. The following are examples of what may become an inherent part of the pupil's portfolio:

1. written work such as poems, plays, stories, outlines, essays, reports, and summaries.
2. journal entrees such as impressions gained from a lesson or unit of study, content acquired, diaries and logs written on vital subject matter and skills learned, as well as a listing of review items necessary to comprehend and understand previously taught learnings.
3. snapshots of construction and art work emphasized in unit teaching.
4. video-tapes and cassettes of group work and oral reports given.
5. self appraisal by the learner.

The portfolio needs to contain a representative sampling of what the pupil has learned. It should not be too voluminous for pupils to complete, nor too scant whereby the entrees are inadequate to indicate pupil learning and achievement. Portfolios are to be evaluated to indicate the quality of the individual pupil's achievement. Rubrics may be developed to appraise each product in the portfolio. The portfolio may well be shared with the child's parents as a means of reporting learner progress. Feedback from responsible persons is necessary to improve the curriculum for each pupil (Ediger, 1995, 1-11).

Thus, the school principal has numerous responsibilities in the evaluation arena. Evaluation needs to be continuous and ongoing. Evaluation procedures used need to reflect the objectives of instruction as well as be valid and reliable.

Conclusion

The principal needs to keep up with trends in the curriculum. He/she is the leader of the school and needs to possess leadership abilities. The principal of the school should understand thoroughly three parts of the curriculum. One part includes the objectives or goals that a teacher needs to stress in ongoing lessons and units of study. The

objectives provide guidelines as to what to emphasize in teaching and learning situations. A teacher without objectives has nothing to guide instruction in the school and classroom setting. Worthwhile, quality objective then need to be in the offing.

A second part of the curriculum for which the principal needs to establish leadership is learning opportunities so that pupils may attain the determined objectives. Learning opportunities should be varied to provide for individual differences. They also need to provide for diverse learning styles (Shaughnessy, 1996). Pupils differ from each other in many ways and each needs a curriculum whereby he/she may achieve optimally. Evaluation procedures to ascertain achievement by learners need to be aligned with the objectives. Validity and reliability of evaluation procedures are of utmost importance.

To guide optimal pupil achievement, quality objectives, learning opportunities, and evaluation procedures must be in the offing for pupils.

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